

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 ACDA-07 AID-05 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /077 W

-----116840 121032Z /15

R 120821Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3696

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAC

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CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PORG, ASEAN, RP

SUBJECT: ASEAN SUMMIT: PHILIPPINE PRESS COMMENT

1. SUMMAR. MANILA MEDIA INTEREST IN THE ASEAN SUMMIT HAS BEEN HEAVY AND CONCENTRATED ON ABANDONMENT OF THE PHILIPPINE CLAIM TO SABAH. OTHER HIGHLIGHTED ISSUES HAVE BEEN (A) GROWING ASEAN UNITY IN ECONOMIC TALKS WITH JAPAN AND OTHER INDUSTRIAL POWERS AND (B) REGIONAL SECURITY IN THE FACE OF INDOCHINESE HOSTILITY TO ASEAN. END SUMMARY.

2. KUALA LUMPUR SUMMIT WAS HEAVILY COVERED BY PHILIPPINE PRESS, TV AND RADIO. MEDIA HAVE DEVOTED MOST EDITORIAL RSPACE IN PAST WEEK TO APPLAUDING PRESIDENT MARCOS'

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ANNOUNCEMENT IN KUALA LUMPUR THAT GOP WILL ABANDON ITS CLAIM TO SABAH (SEPTTEL). COLUMNISTS UNANIMOUSLY SAW MARCOS' SABAH STATEMENT AS CONTRIBUTING TO REGIONAL HARMONY AND AS NATIONAL "SACRIFICE" FOR GOOD OF THE REGION. EDITORIALISTS HAVE THUS DEVOTED SOMEWHAT LESS SPACE TO RHAPSODIZING ABOUT SUCCESS OF ASEAN SUMMIT AND ASSERTING PRESIDENT MARCOS' REGIONAL LEADERSHIP.

3. PRIMARY ISSUE OF SUMMIT PER SE, AS SEEN BY MANILA'S GUIDIDE PRESS, WAS CONSOLIDATED ASEAN STANCE VIS-A-VIS INDUSTRIAL POWERS, PARTICULARLY JAPAN. SEVERAL COLUMNISTS NOTED THE "COHESIVENESS" OF THE LEADERS IN DEALING WITH OUTSIDERS. DAILY EXPRESS EDITORIAL OF AUGUST 8 SAYS "THE TIME WHEN BIG POWERS COULD MANIPULATE THE ASEAN MEMBER-STATES IS NOW PAST." CITING THE "FIVE PLUS THREE" MEETINGS BETWEEN ASEAN LEADERS AND PRIMINS OF JAPAN, AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND, AS WELL AS SIMILAR PLANNED TALKS WITH THE U.S. AND EEC, THE EDITORIAL CONCLUDES THAT "CONSIDERING THAT SOME OF THESE COUNTRIES HAD IGNORED ASEAN IN THE PAST, IF THEY HAD NOT ACTUALLY TRIED TO PUT OBSTACLES IN ITS PATH, IT CERTAINLY IS NO LITTLE ACCOMPLISHMENT FOR ASEAN TO HAVE GAINED NOT ONLY THEIR RECOGNITION BUT THEIR READINESS TO DEAL WITH THE ASSOCIATION ON EQUAL TERMS." TIMES JOURNAL OF AUGUST 9 ASSERTS THAT "THE KUALA LUMPUR MEETING WAS INTENDED MAINLY TO BUILD A FRAMEWORK FOR A NEW RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ASEAN AND JAPAN." THE EVEINING EXPRESS EDITORIALIZED AUGUST 9 THAT NEW JAPANESE AID COMMITMENTS "PROVE THAT THE GROUP (ASEAN) HAS COME INTO ITS OWN AS AN EMERGING, POTENT ECONOMIC BLOC." ON THE OTHER HAND, WELL-CONNECTED GADFLY COLUMNIST DOROY VALENCIA, TRUE TO FORM, COMPLAINED THAT "IT IS NOT IMPORTANT TO ASEAN, LEAST OF ALL TO US FILIPINOS, WHETHER JAPAN WILL GIVE AID OR NOT. WHAT WE ARE KEEN ABOUT IS WHETHER JAPAN IS PREPARED TO TRADE WITH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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US IN A MANNER FAIR AND JUST TO BOTH PARTIES...WE WOULD RATHER HAVE A BALANCED TRADE WITH NO AID, NO LOANS, NOT EVEN TECHNICAL HELP."

4. ONLY OTHER ISSUE PROMPTING WIDESPREAD EDITORIAL COMMENT WAS INTERLOCKING ONE OF INDOCHINA'S ATTITUDE TOWARD ASEAN AND REGIONAL SECURITY. SEVERAL COLUMNISTS NOTED ABSENCE OF STATEMENT ON SECURITY IN JOINT COMMUNIQUE. VALENCIA EXPLAINED: "IF THE LEADERS OF ASEAN TOOK UP SECURITY, THEY'RE NOT SAYING. IF THEY AGREED ON ANYTHING, THEY NEVER MADE IT PUBLIC. THEY CAN'T. ONE OF ASEAN'S MAIN CONCERNS IS FRIENDSHIP WITH THE WHOLE WORLD. ANY TALK OF SECURITY COULD PUT ASEAN IN TROUBLE WITH THEIR NEIGHBORS. BUT YOU CAN LAY BETS THEY TALKED ABOUT SECURITY. THEY COULD NOT HELP IT. TO SAY THEY NEVER CONSIDERED SECURITY IS TO ACCUSE THE ASEAN LEADERS OF NAIVETE." SUPERNATIONALIST ERNIE GRANADA OF THE TIMES JOURNAL OPINED "THE ONLY THREAT POISED BY ASEAN IS TO WESTERN AND JAPANESE ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION AND POLITICAL MANIPULATION. BUT ITS PROMISE IS THE UNITY AND COMMON WELFARE OF SOUTHEAST ASIA. ALL THIS SHOULD CONVINCE THE REST OF SOUTHEAST ASIA OF THE GOOD INTENT, VITALITY AND DYNAMISM OF ASEAN. AND THE IDEAL

IS FOR OTHER SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES PARTICULARLY VIETNAM, LAOS AND CAMBODIA TO EVENTUALLY JOIN." COLUMNIST VICENTE TANEDO OF BULLETIN TODAY, CHANGING THE SUBJECT SOMEWHAT, NOTED THAT "ASEAN PRUDENCE ON REGIONAL SECURITY DID NOT HAMPER EFFORTS TO CONCLUDE BILATERAL ACCORDS THAT WOULD SET UP THE DEFENSIVE MECHANISMS BETWEEN NEIGHBORS," SUCH AS THE PHILIPPINE-MALAYSIAN BORDER CROSSING AGREEMENT.

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5. COMMENT: THE MAJOR PHILIPPINE OBJECTIVE FOR THE SUMMIT -- TO OBTAIN SIGNIFICANTLY LIBERALIZED TRADING TERMS WITH JAPAN -- WAS UNREALIZED, AS WERE HOPES FOR MAJOR REGIONAL INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS AND EXPANDED REGIONAL TRADE. HOWEVER, THE SABAH STATEMENT HAS SO DEFLECTED CRITICISM AWAY FROM THESE OTHER REGIONAL ISSUES THAT LITTLE FILIPINO PUBLIC ATTENTION IS BEING PAID TO THEM.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, SUMMIT MEETINGS
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977MANILA12627
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770868/aaaacezo.tel
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Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1619046
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ASEAN SUMMIT: PHILIPPINE PRESS COMMENT
TAGS: PORG, RP, ASEAN
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/1f51755b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009